

## **Experience on UKM-UDE Double Degree Program**

This report is prepared for Mercator Office, Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia to provide information for potential applicants and as a record of personal experience of the author in the UKM-UDE Double Degree Program.

Preparation of student in order to participate in the Double Degree Program is rather complicated and time consuming. Students who intend to participate in the Double Degree Program are advised to begin their preparation from 2nd year in UKM. This includes having to complete compulsory German language courses of level A1 and A2 organized by the Mercator Office.

To begin the application process, an application form together with the student's CV and English translated certificates are expected to be submitted to the Mercator Office as soon as the call for applicants are advertised. Once the application form is submitted, students are advised to follow instructions from Mercator Office as every steps of the application is essential to make the way up to Germany! Please be informed that a financial preparation of at least 8040 Euro (approximately equivalent to RM 32, 000) is a must for living expenses and visa application of 1 year. Another 600 Euro (approximately RM 2, 400) is expected for the deposit of accommodation if the student intend to stay in a student hostel. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) however, provides scholarship sufficient to cover above expenses for exceptional students, only after the student's arrival in Germany.

Getting a one way flight ticket to Germany at the beginning of October is another task to be carried out by the student himself. Duisburg or Essen is the town where the student has to be present after arrived in Germany. Please contact with the Liaison Officer of UKM Office in University of Duisburg-Essen for details upon arrival. It is worthwhile to be mentioned that the price for a direct flight from Kuala Lumpur to Frankfurt could be varied in rather significant range. It could be purchased with a price as low as RM 1, 200 as from personal experience of the author. Start looking for the price of flight ticket from different airline company! Once the student has arrived in Germany, the Liaison Officer and seniors staying in Germany pose a great help before the student could settle down. Don't be afraid to ask for help when in need.

Living in Germany is very much different than in Malaysia. Germany generally has a significantly colder climate compare to the other parts of the Europe continent. The climate change of four seasons is much challenging especially during the winter. Besides that, most of the residents in Germany speak only the German language in their everyday life. Therefore, one must be an effective user of the German language to be part of the society. This includes, but not only limited to dealing with government officers and the university authorities.

Major expenses of a student studying in Germany include rental, insurance and food. The prerequisite amount of 670 Euro per month as required when processing visa application for a year is sufficient to cover the living expenses.

In the academic aspect, students are required to take courses as instructed by the coordinator of Double Degree Program. Be prepared that most of the lectures are conducted in the German language so having a strong basic in German language has proven to be self worthy. Some courses however, offer an English version of the final examination. Take note that the final grade of courses in UDE is purely based on the marks obtained in the final examination. From the personal experience of the author, getting a passing mark in the final examination is achievable as long as there is enough preparation on both lecture and exercise. Students who completed their study with a Grade Point Average of 1,3 or better would be rewarded a "Passed with Distinction" in their Bachelor certificate.

Students are required to complete a bachelor project and a bachelor thesis in UDE as part of the requirement of UKM-UDE Double Degree Program. The title for project and thesis are published by individual departments of UDE in their corresponding website or signboard. One has to find a title for project or thesis of his interest and contact the corresponding department in order to take the title as their project or thesis. The project is normally completed in a group of 2 to 5 while thesis can only be completed individually.

Having an opportunity to travel around Europe is a plus and once in a lifetime experience. Students who studying in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) has a semester ticket built into their student card that made travelling around NRW region possible. For example, a student studying in Duisburg is able to travel to Dusseldorf, Cologne, Bonn, Aachen and many other cities in NRW by regional train with only his student card. Others popular and nearby destinations for vacation are London, Amsterdam, Prague, Berlin, Munich, Brussels, Paris, Zurich, Vienna and many more.

Prepared by,

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- Photos taken during the author's vacation to Pisa (left) and Milan (right), Italy.



- Photo taken during the author's vacation to Vienna, Austria.